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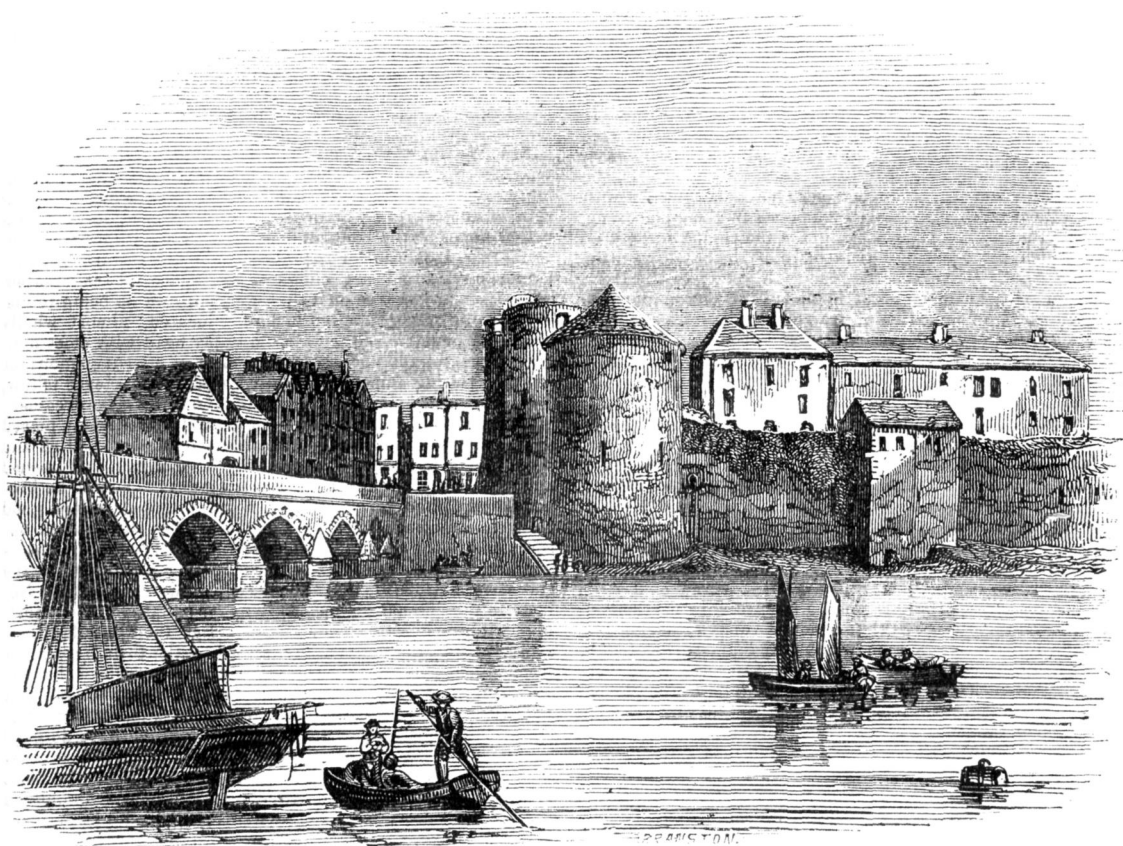
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VOLUME I.



THOMOND BRIDGE AND THE CASTLE OF LIMERICK.

THERE is scarcely in all Ireland a scene which has so many exciting associations connected with it as that which we have chosen as the pictorial subject for the present number of our Journal. The bridge is indeed a new one; but it is erected on the site of that most ancient one which was the scene of so many a hard-fought battle for all that men hold dear; and the castle—ruined and time-worn, it is true—is the same fortress which served in turn the race by whom it was erected, and, as if partaking of the change which our soil is said to make in the feelings of all those who settle on it, became the last and most impregnable stronghold of those it was designed to subdue.

But some of the events connected with this scene—and these events, too, the most important—though honourable to the manly character of all concerned in them, and such as all the members of the great family of the British empire may now feel a pride in—are still associated with remembrances which to many are of a saddening cast, and which require to be softened by distance or time before they can be distinctly awakened without giving pain—like our country's music, of which even some of the most exhilarating movements have strange tones of sorrow blended with them, which to many temperaments are too touching if strongly accented. And we do not

therefore regret that in the short notice of Limerick Bridge and Castle which we have to present to our readers, neither our plan nor our space will permit us to give any sketch of their history but such as may be read by all, if not with pleasure, at least without pain.

The Castle and Bridge of Limerick owe their origin to the first Anglo-Norman settlers in Ireland, and were erected to secure their possessions and facilitate the extension of them. It is probable, however, if not certain, that the site of the castle had been previously occupied by a stronghold of the Ostmen or Danes who settled in Limerick in the ninth century, and with whom, if they were not its founders, its authentic history as a city at least begins; for the earlier historical notices connected with it relate only to its church or churches.

These churches, with whatever town may have been connected with them, were plundered by the Danes as early as the year 812; and there is every reason to believe that they fortified the island in the Shannon, or what is now called the English town, with walls and towers very shortly afterwards, as our annalists record the predatory devastations of the Danes of Limerick in Connaught and Meath as early as the year 843, as well as at various years subsequent. They

were, however, at length conquered, but not removed, by the victorious arms of Brian Boru, and afterwards Limerick appears in history only as an Irish city, though its inhabitants were chiefly of Danish descent. It was here that Turlogh O'Brien, king of Munster, received in 1064 the homage of Donlevy, king of Ulidia; and his son and successor, Murtogh O'Brien, having given Cashel, the ancient metropolis of Munster, to the church, made Limerick his chief residence and the capital of the province, from which time it continued to be the seat of the kings of Thomond or North Munster, who were hence called kings of Limerick until its final conquest by the English in the commencement of the thirteenth century.

But though thus relieved from the terrors of foreign aggression, Limerick was not secured from the equally sanguinary attacks of the Irish themselves; and our annalists record the burning of the city by Dermot Mac Murrough in 1014, the very year after the death of Brian, and again in 1088 by Donnell Mac Loughlin, king of Aileach, or the Northern Hy Niall. It was besieged in 1157 by Murtogh, the son of Niall Mac Loughlin, at the head of the forces of the North and of Leinster, when the Danish inhabitants were forced to renounce the authority of Turlogh O'Brien, and to banish him east of the Shannon; and though he was soon after restored to a moiety of his principality, he was obliged in 1160 to give hostages to Roderic O'Connor, to escape his vengeance.

Thus weakened and harassed by the intestine divisions which so fearfully increased in Ireland after the successful and splendid usurpation of the supreme monarchy by their ancestor Brian Boru, it should not be wondered at if the kings of Limerick had made but a feeble resistance to the enthusiastic and disciplined bravery of the Anglo-Norman adventurers, or that their city should have been easily won and as easily kept by these bold warriors; and yet it was not till after many towns of greater importance, if not strength, had been taken by them and securely held, that Limerick ceased to acknowledge its ancient lords as masters. Its king, Donnell O'Brien, was indeed one of the first of the Irish princes, who, forsaking the Irish monarch after the arrival of Strongbow, leagued himself with the English in support of Mac Murrough, whose daughter, the half sister of the Earl's wife, he had married; and as a reward for his defection, the king of Limerick claimed the assistance of Strongbow in attacking the king of Ossory. The result of this request is so honourable to the character of one of the Norman chiefs, and is so graphically sketched by Maurice Regan, the king of Leinster's secretary, that we are tempted to relate it in his own words, as translated by Sir George Carew.

"The Erle was no sooner come to the city (Waterford) but a messenger from O'Brien, kyng of Limerick, repaired unto him from his master, praying hym with all his forces to march into Ossery against Donald, that common enemy. The cause of friendship between the Erle and O'Brien was, that O'Brien had married one of the daughters of Dermot, kyng of Leinster, and half sister to the Erle's wife. Unto the message the Erle made answere, that he would satisfie O'Brien's request, and they met at Ydough, and being joined, their forces were two thousand strong. Donald, fearing the approach of his enemies, sent to the Erle to desire hym that he mought have a safe guard to come unto him, and then he doubted not but to gyve hym satisfaction. The request was graunted, and Maurice de Prindergast was sent for hym; but he, for the more securitie, obtained the words of the Erle and O'Brien, and the othes of all the chieftains of the army, that the kyng of Ossery shuld come and return in safetie; which done, he went to Donald, and within fewe hours he brought hym to the campe in the presence of all the army. The Erle and O'Brien charged him with divers treasons and practices which he had attempted against his lord the kyng of Leinster, deceased; and O'Brien, and all the captens, disallowinge of his excuses, councelled the Erle to hang him, and O'Brien, without delay, commanded his men to harrasse and spoile Donald's countrie, which willingly they performed. Maurice de Prindergast misliking these proceedings, and seeinge the danger the kyng of Ossery was in, presently mounted on his horse, commaunded his companie to do the like, and said, 'My lords, what do you mean to do?' and turning to the captens, he tould them 'that they dishonoured themselves, and that they had falsified their faiths unto hym,' and sware by the cross of his sword that no man there that day shoulde dare lay handes on the kyng of Ossery; whereupon the Erle having sense of his honour, calling to mynde how far it was engaged,

delivered Donald unto Maurice, commanding him to see him safely conveyed unto his men. Upon the way in their return they encountered O'Brien's men, laden with the spoiles of Ossery. Prindergast charged them, slaying nine or ten of those free booters; and having brought Donald to his men, lodged with him that night in the woods, and the next morning returned to the Erle."

For the part which Donnell O'Brien thus acted, he had to defend himself from the merited vengeance of the Irish monarch; and though he was for a time able to ward it off by the assistance of Robert Fitzstephen, he deemed it prudent, on the death of Mac Murrough in 1171, to return to his allegiance to Roderic, and give him hostages for his fidelity. On the arrival of King Henry II. in Ireland, however, in 1172, he again submitted to the authority of the English monarch, to whom he came upon the banks of the river near Cashel, swore fealty, and became tributary.

But these oaths were not long held sacred by Donnell. The return of the king to England was soon followed by a general outburst of the Irish princes against the unjust encroachments of the adventurers, and Donnell O'Brien, once more taking possession of Limerick, led his troops, which were strengthened by the battalions of West Connaught, into the strongholds of the English in Kilkenny, who hastily retreated before them into Waterford, and left the country a prey to their devastations. To punish these daring aggressions of Donnell, Earl Strongbow, in the following year, as stated in the Annals of Inisfallen, collecting a large body of the English from the various parts of Ireland, marched into the heart of O'Brien's territory, where he was met and encountered by him at Thurles, and defeated with a loss of four knights and seven hundred men. Strongbow, returning to Waterford, found the gates closed against him; the people, hearing of his defeat, having seized on the garrison in his absence, and put them to the sword. After a month's sojourn on the little island, as it is called, in the mouth of the river at Waterford, Strongbow returned to Dublin, and summoning a council of the chiefs, it was determined to carry on the war with the king of Limerick with the greatest vigour. The success which they experienced might, however, have been of a different kind, if they had not been joined on this occasion by the king of Ossory, who had been already so grievously treated by O'Brien, and who was naturally rejoiced at the opportunity thus afforded him of wreaking his revenge upon his old enemy.

"With the good likeinge," says Maurice Regan, "of all the chieftains, Reymond le Grosse, the Constable of Leinster, whoe was a man discretee and valiaunt, and by his parents of good livelyhood, was designed to be general of the army: their randevouse for the assembling of their troops was Ossory. The kyng of Ossory joined with them, and undertook to guide the army upon O'Brien. Nevertheless, Reymond mistrusted his faith, whyche the kyng of Ossory perceaving, protested his integritie with suche fervency, as it gave full satisfaction, that he would be faithfull unto him; which Donald performid with sinceritie, in guiding the army until it came to the citie of Limericke, whyche was invironed with a foule and deepe ditch with running water, not to be passed over without boats, but at one foord onely. At the first approach the soldiers were discouraged, and mutinied to return, supposing the citie, by reason of the water, was impregnable. But that valiaunt knight, Meyler Fitz Henry, having found the foord, wyth a loud voice cried, 'St David, companions, let us courageously pass this foord.' He led the waye, and was followed by four horsemen, who, when they were gotten over, were assailed by the enemy."

The account given by Cambrensis of this affair, as translated by Sir R. C. Hoare, is somewhat different in its details. He says that "upon this occasion, one David Walsh clapped spurs to his horse, and, plunging boldly into the stream, reached the opposite shore in safety, and exclaimed loudly 'that he had found a ford,' yet never a man would follow him, save one Geoffrey Judas, who, on his return with David to conduct the army across the river, was carried away by the impetuosity of the current, and unfortunately drowned. Meyler, however, undismayed by this accident, and seeing the awkward manner in which his kinsman Reymond was placed, ventured into the river, and gained the opposite bank; and whilst he was engaged in defending himself against the citizens of Limerick, who attacked him with stones, and threatened to kill him, Reymond, who had hitherto been employed in the rear of his army, appeared on the river side, and seeing

the imminent danger to which his nephew Meyler was exposed, exhorted his troops to try the passage of the Shannon; and such was the influence of this brave leader over them, that at the risk of their lives they followed him across the river, and having put the enemy to flight, took quiet possession of their city.

Having left a strong garrison in Limerick under the command of his kinsman Milo of St David's, Raymond returned to Leinster with the remainder of his army. But in consequence of unfavourable representations respecting his conduct made to the king, he was on the point of returning to England, when intelligence reached Strongbow that Donnell O'Brien was again in arms, and investing Limerick with a powerful army; and that, as the garrison had nearly consumed their whole winter stock of provisions, immediate succour was absolutely necessary. Strongbow resolved accordingly to fly to their relief without loss of time; but the whole army refused to march to Limerick under any leader but Raymond, who was consequently persuaded to postpone his departure, and to take command of the troops. He set out, accordingly, for Munster, at the head of 80 knights, 200 cavalry, and 300 archers, to which were joined a considerable body of Irish, as they passed through Ossory and Hy Kinselagh, under the command of their respective princes. Donald O'Brien was not inactive, but advanced to meet him to the pass at Cashel, which was not only strong by nature, but rendered more difficult of access by trees and hedges thrown across it. Meyler's usual success, however, attended him. Whilst Donald was animating his troops to battle, the impatient Meyler burst forth like a whirlwind, destroyed the hedges, opened a passage by his sword, and putting the enemies to flight, again took possession of the city.

Shortly afterwards, a parley was held with Raymond by the king of Limerick and Roderic O'Connor, in which the Irish princes once more swore allegiance to King Henry and his heirs, and delivered up hostages as a guarantee of their fidelity.

The death of Earl Strongbow, however, which followed soon after these events, once more restored Limerick to its native prince, never again to be wrested from him but by death. In consequence of the necessary departure of Raymond from Ireland, it was deemed expedient, as well by himself as by his friends, to relinquish the possession of a city so surrounded by enemies, and which it required so large a force to defend, and particularly as no person could be found willing to take the command of its garrison after his departure. Making a virtue of necessity, therefore, Raymond unwillingly conferred the command on Donnell himself, as a liege servant of the king, who, in accepting of it, renewed his former promises of fidelity and service by fresh oaths of allegiance. But oaths were very lightly observed by all parties in those troubled times; and Raymond and his followers had scarcely passed the farther end of the bridge, than the citizens, at the instigation of Donnell, who declared that Limerick should no longer be a nest for foreigners, broke it down, and set fire to the city in four different quarters.

Yet it was not resigned to Donnell without another effort. In 1179, a grant of the kingdom of Limerick, then wholly in the possession of the Irish, having been made to Herbert Fitz-Herbert, who resigned it to Philip de Braosa, or Bruce, the English, with their Irish allies, led by Miles Cogan and Robert Fitzstephen, invested the city, with a view to establish Bruce in his principality; but they were no sooner perceived from the ramparts of the town than the garrison gave a striking proof of their inveterate hostility by setting it on fire; and though Cogan and Fitzstephen still offered to lead on the attack, Bruce and his followers refused to risk their lives in a contest whose first beginnings gave so bad an omen of success.

After a series of conflicts with the English in different parts of Munster, in which he was usually the victor, Donnell O'Brien died a natural death in 1194, and with him the line of Irish kings of Limerick may be said to have terminated. In the following year we find the town in the possession of the English, and though it was again taken from them in 1198, it was recovered shortly afterwards by the renowned William de Burgo, who formed a settlement, which from that period defied all the power of the Irish.

This result was in a great measure owing to the natural strength of position of the city itself; but it was not till years afterwards that its strength was rendered such as it might be supposed was impregnable, by the erection of the proud

fortress, of the ruins of which our view will give a tolerable idea. This castle, and the bridge, which has been recently rebuilt, were erected by King John in 1210; and though the former has since that period been the scene of many a national conflict, its ruins still display a proud magnificence, and are not an unworthy feature of the scenery on the banks of that mighty river which has so often witnessed its trials and contributed to its defence. P.

EDITORIAL SQUABBLES.

THERE are not many things we like better than a row, a paper war between a couple of newspaper editors; there is something so delectable in the sincere cordiality with which they abuse each other—so amusing in the air of surpassing wisdom and knowledge with which they contradict, and in the easy confident superiority with which they demolish each other's assertions and positions. The most pleasant feature perhaps in the whole, however—and it is one that pervades all the manifestoes of their High Mightinesses—is the obvious conviction of each that he is demolishing, annihilating his antagonist; while you, the cool, dispassionate, and unconcerned reader, feel perfectly satisfied (and here lies the fun of the thing) that this said antagonist, so far from being demolished or annihilated, will become only more vigorous and rampant for the castigation inflicted on him.

Another amusing enough feature of editorial controversies is the infallibility of these worthy gentlemen. An editor is never wrong; it is invariably his "contemporary," who has misunderstood or misrepresented him, either through ignorance or wilfulness. He did not say that—what he did say was this; and if his contemporary had read his article with ordinary attention, he would have found it so.

The editorial war being carried on in different styles according to circumstances and the tempers of the belligerents, the hostile articles assume various characters, amongst which are what may be called the Demolisher or Smasher, the Contradictor (calm and confident), the Abuser, and the Rejoinder and Settler (with cool and easy accompaniments). Of these various styles we happen to have at this moment some pretty tolerable specimens before us, two or three of which we shall select for the edification of our readers. The first is from "The Meridian Sun," and is of the description which we would call

THE DEMOLISHER.

Our contemporary "The Northern Luminary," as that concentration of dullness and opacity has the effrontery to call itself, is, we see, at his old tricks again. In the present case he is amusing himself with nibbling and cavilling at our account of the great public political dinner given by the inhabitants of our good town to our independent member, Josiah Priggins of Parsley-green, Esq. Our voracious contemporary accuses us of having omitted all notice of the hisses with which, *he* says, some portions of Mr Priggins's speech were received. He further charges us with passing over in silence certain "disgraceful disturbances" by which, *he* asserts, the evening was marked, and concludes by stigmatizing the meeting as one of the lowest in character, and most unruly in conduct, that ever brought odium on a respectable community.

Now, can our readers guess the secret of all this spleen on the part of "The Northern Luminary," of which, by the way, a certain prominent feature of that gentleman's face is no bad type? We will tell them: he was not invited to the dinner! And, more, let us tell *him*, had he presented himself, he would not have been admitted!

Here, then, is the whole secret of the affair, and having mentioned it, we have explained all, and need not say that the "hisses" and "disgraceful disturbances" are gratuitous inventions of the enemy—in other words, downright fabrications.

We had the honour of being at the dinner in question, and sat the whole evening at Mr Priggins's left hand, and, thus situated, if there had been hissing, we certainly must have heard it. But there was none. Not a single hiss; and for the truth of this assertion we unhesitatingly pledge our word of honour. So far from any part or parts of Mr Priggins's speech being hissed, every sentiment, almost every word that gentleman uttered, was hailed with unanimous and unbounded applause. In fact, we never heard a speech that gave such general satisfaction. As to the "disgraceful disturbances,"